

Support for the Voluntary Sector Task Group

Recommendations

- 1 The Council should explore with Three Rivers DC opportunities for joint funding of cross border voluntary sector organisations and related projects.
- 2 The Council should provide active support and encouragement to grant funded organisations to share resources such as paid staff and premises. The Council should also encourage joint bids for funding.
- 3 The available grants budget should be split into two streams – one for social and community work and projects one for art and cultural work and projects. Each stream should be defined by a different policy developed through extensive external consultation.
- 4 The Council should review its criteria for grant awards to reflect changing circumstances and community needs brought about by the current economic problems.
- 5 The Council should be more specific about the voluntary sector services it wishes to support to limit the number of bidders but increase their chances of being successful.
- 6 There should be fluidity between the Mayor's Community Fund and the Councillor's ward fund where councillors can identify suitable projects for joint funding. In order to ensure some equity in the process each ward should be allocated a nominal £1,000 at the start of the year.
- 7 The task group has raised a number of issues around properties leased from the Council by voluntary sector organisations. The Task Group recommends that the new Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as a priority for its 2011/12 work programme, establishes a task group to review these anomalies and issues.
- 8 The task group decided against including an examination of the likely affects of the Big Society on the voluntary sector in the scope of this review. However, members agreed that this will be a significant factor in the future and recommends that the new Overview & Scrutiny Committee establishes a task group to look at how the Big Society might impact on the voluntary sector and on the Council's grant giving.